

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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REPUBLICANS SHED CROCODILE TEARS OVER ENERGY PRICES BUT TAKE A BITE OUT OF CONSUMERS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the executives of the top five major oil companies will appear in front of lawmakers at a joint Senate Energy and Natural Resources and Commerce Committee to explain the skyrocketing cost of oil to American consumers. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) a senior Democrat on the Energy and Commerce Committee made the following statement on the Republican ‘rush’ to address the rising cost of energy for consumers:

“Under pressure from their constituents to address the spiking cost of energy, the Republicans are shedding crocodile tears about high oil and gas prices and calling for emergency hearings, but these tears are hard to swallow since these are the very same Republicans who drafted the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the GAS Act at the wishes of Big Oil.

“Recently my Republican colleagues recently have asked the oil companies to kindly ‘volunteer’ to give back a portion of their profits – a request that has fallen on deaf ears in the board rooms of Big Oil and was rejected by President Bush’s Energy Secretary. So, they really have no plan.

“These oil companies aren’t using their own profits to re-invest in new refinery capacity -- they’ve shut down 30 refineries over the last decade and they’re taking the huge cash infusion they’ve received and handing it over to their shareholders in the form of increased dividends and stock buybacks. At the same time, the oil companies are benefiting from billions in new tax breaks approved by their friends in the Republican-controlled Congress. It just doesn’t make sense. Most Americans are outraged to find out that we are robbing the government coffers to pay America’s wealthiest corporations to simply do their jobs.

“GOP used to stand for Grand Old Party, but now it stands for Gas and Oil Party. High gas prices and consumer price gouging is the expected result of the Bush Administration’s policy to ‘Leave No Oil Company Behind’ lacks a vision for U.S. energy policy beyond assisting big energy companies. House and Senate Republicans missed an opportunity to reduce U.S. dependency on foreign oil and protect American consumers from high energy prices, choosing instead to pass not one but two bills that benefiting the oil industry.”

Rep. Markey is introducing a bill that would impose a 50 percent tax on oil companies for oil sold at prices above \$40 a barrel and return the generated revenue to consumers who have been bearing the brunt of high gas prices by providing an income tax rebate and supplementing funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. H.R. 4263, the Windfall Profit and Consumer Assistance Act of 2005, introduced today by Reps. Markey and Emanuel would also exempt profits that are reinvested by oil companies to increase refinery capacity or invest in new production.

For more information, check out: www.house.gov/markey.